

Dead Earth

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Summary: Sci-Fi Gothic, I think. You have dead planet, and two ships.

Dead Earth

TRANSFORMERS: DEAD EARTH by D. Park

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Chapter 1: Planet Fall

In the cramped space, a robot lies motionless on a bunk. He was small for his species, only slightly taller than an average human. He was called Sarkos, which for some reason, is a variation of Greek "Sarcos" which means flesh. Sarkos was mostly blue, with a face plate where his mouth would've been. His equivalent of eyes, optics, were a glowing green. He was of a slight build, but nothing to sneeze at for a robot. He was in his restoration state. But his processors were still working. If artificial intelligences have what we call dreams, then the Autobot called Sarkos would be having one. Sarkos looked around at the landscape. He knew that it was only a dream, but he had the strange feeling that this dream meant something, an intangible feeling impossible to grasp. It was a black, endless place, then it shifted, slowly, and inexorably. He was at the pilot seat on the bridge. Looking at the scanner readout, he saw that they were near a planet. He looked around to get a good view of his surroundings. Bridge looked normal, but he felt that something was missing. Then an explosion rocked the ship. He heard Ratchet say something about an orbital defense system firing at us, and that the cargo hold had been depressurized. The cargo had been sucked into space. He woke up to the sound of the ship paging system. Sarkos felt like somebody had walked on his grave, that inexplicable sense of great and undefinable dread. But duty called, and he shook it off. The Miraxus had dropped out of hyperspace. They were probably in the vicinity of a gravity well, it is both stupid and dangerous to use hyperspatial drives in a

strong gravity well. Sarkos was the pilot for the ship, and when they dropped out of hyperspace, he was needed. He headed to the ship's bridge, walking down the sterile gray corridors.. The ship was not a pretty one, being a cargo ship, but then, aesthetics weren't much of an issue to the Autobot faction. Form follows function, a lesson learned during the many eons of war that had almost ripped their species from existence. The Transformers had been fighting since before the first primate climbed the trees of primordial earth. Their history was a long series of bloody and violent wars, the causes lost in the confusion of the fighting. But there was peace, for now.

***** Wildstorm had been commander of this ship for years. He didn't age, but that was normal. He looked like cross between a helicopter, jet fighter, and humanoid robot. The Miraxus had weathered many battles, but now, they were going home. To Cybertron. It had been a few days since entering this system's gravity well. The navigation charts identified this system as the Sol system. An old haunt of the VIB aboard, and source of heavy influence on all Cybertrons. They were really just scanning the system, comparing it against old charts. They had time to stop and smell the roses. Ratchet was at the ship status monitors, Grimlock was in the weapons pod, two decks up. Most of the crew was either in the cargo bay or the engine room. The VIB Observer Ultra Magnus sat near the glass plate that gave the view of space, a rather dismal planet. But where was the communications officer? They were receiving a signal from the artificial satellites in orbit. Cable was the only one who had the expertise to translate it. Ratty looking, almost untrustworthyâ€¦

Wildstorm turned around in his chair to face Ratchet. "Where is Cable?" he asked. Ratchet shrugged. Sarkos entered the bridge and took his place at the pilot's seat. "Navigation says that we're in orbit around Earth. There are a few faint signs of biological life and some Cybertron signatures. There is also an unexplainable energy signature all around the planet." The planet was covered in gray clouds, no part visible underneath the filthy air. "This is Earth?" Ultra Magnus said, not believing his optics. "According to the navigation charts it is." "The Earth I knew was blue with oceans and had white clouds. It even had millions of animal and plant species. This" He gestured to the globe on the screen. "is not Earth." Magnus did not notice that Wildstorm had stopped listening to him after the first sentence. He was busy with a recognizable signal. It was a distress signal. A Decepticon distress signal. Despite an uneasy peace between the Autobots and the Decepticons, the Autobots had been back-stabbed more than once by the Decepticons. "Sarkos, there's a Decepticon distress call. Move in to aid and assist." Wildstorm commanded, steeling himself. Sarkos hesitated, a haunting presence of evil pervaded his senses briefly. "Engaging jets." Sarkos finally said. He steered the ship towards the source of the signal. Wildstorm turned on the ship's communication systems. "Attention. We are conducting a rescue operation on a Decepticon ship. All hands to stations. Be on the lookout for intruders." He turned it off.

On the Decepticon ship, the Commander wore the smile of an insanity. A flunky, named Rook, came up to him, bearing news of a traitor. "Sir, Cable is safely on board." Rook looked around nervously, the crew had put him up to this. "Sir, if I may ask, why did we lure the Autobots with a distress call? I thought that was a violation of the Pax Cybertronica." The commander grabbed Rook by the neck, enraged. Then he broke out laughing. "Rook you silly thing! We may have violated the Pax Cybertronica, but if these pitiful Autobots don't survive, who will be there to tell anyone? Certainly not anyone from this crew. Besides, Autobots cannot resist helping the helpless. It

is in their nature."

The Miraxus got closer and closer to the Decepticon ship. All seemed to be going well, nothing out of the ordinary. As the Miraxus got closer, the Decepticon ship powered up weapons. The Miraxus backed away suddenly, while the Decepticon ship fired missiles, swiping the underside of the Miraxus. The Gauss guns of the Miraxus fired back, scorching the side of the other ship. Detecting the exchange, Terran satellites turned toward the two ships and fired high density particle weapons for the purpose they had been built for: Defense of Earth. The particle beams lanced out, searing space, cutting through the armor of both ships. Systems were compromised and melted, both ships began the deadly descent into Earth's atmosphere. Slowly at first, the ships fell away from each other, hulls turning a bright red under the friction. The Miraxus' cargo bay exploded in a shower of shrapnel, crates and people falling helplessly into the wild gray yonder. Powerful winds swirled and tossed the Miraxus around like a feather. Finally, the Miraxus cleared the cloud layer and crashed into a building, turning it into rubble. ***** The Miraxus's bridge was a mess, wiring and melted metal was everywhere. A large rip in the ceiling showed where a particle beam had atomized the plating. Grimlock, having been sitting in a chair that had also been vaporized, had fallen onto Sarko's station, and now lay unconscious. Wildstorm was sprawled in front of the shattered viewing glass, missing an arm. Ultra Magnus had suffered badly, his lower body had been mangled beyond repair. At his station, Ratchet was the first to awaken. He was missing his lower legs and saw the massive damage that the others had sustained. As calmly as he could, he got out a repair kit and began to seal up his leg wound. Wildstorm stirred and got up. Being the commander, and seeing that he had sustained the least of the injuries, he popped open the compartment nearby and pulled out a repair kit and made it over to Ultra Magnus. "Just hold on. I'll get to Ultra Magnus later." Ratchet said weakly. "Ratchet, I'll take care of it." Wildstorm said as he began to seal off Ultra Magnus' wound. Sarkos heard the moving and called out. "Can you get Grimlock off of me?" The little robot was trapped by Grimlock's limbs. Sarkos was under him, but couldn't get out. A large metal shard had driven itself through Grimlock's chest, the point almost touching Sarkos' head. Wildstorm smiled weakly, "Sorry bud, can't. Only got one arm." Wildstorm finished repairing Ultra Magnus's power supply. The old robot's blue eyes lit up. "Where am I?" Ultra Magnus asked. "A dead Earth." Wildstorm replied. "Slag."

Ratchet was worried. With the kind of damage that the crash had done to the bridge crew alone, how many more were badly damaged or even dead? They were going to have to choose alternate forms. His legs were useless. He'd never walk again unless he got an alternate form. "Captain, I recommend that we get new alternate modes to blend in with the planet's natives." Wildstorm turned around. "First we have to find the rest of the crew." He walked over to the hulking body of Grimlock. "Okay Sarkos, you push while I pull." Sarkos pushed up on Grimlock's body while Wildstorm pulled him off of the pilot. Grimlock fell to the floor. The jolt woke him up. "What happened? It was those slagging Decepticruds, wasn't it?" Grimlock raged. "They fired at us, yes. But what did the most damage were those satellites in orbit. They actually fired at us. I suspect that the signal that we were getting from them was a warning." Wildstorm replied, pulling the metal shard from Grimlock's chest. Secretly, Wildstorm also suspected that Cable was a traitor. "Sarkos, you're the smallest here, could you go help the rest of the crew?" "They're far more likely to make

fun of me than be grateful." grumbled Sarkos. But he forced his way through the rubble blocking the entryway.

Gees woke up in the maintenance shaft she had been in. At the wrong end of it. She got up and found that she was trapped. The ship seemed to be tilting slightly, like it was balancing on something. She reviewed her options. But her logic circuits were overridden by the irrationality of claustrophobia. She began pounding on the walls when a door opened behind her. Sarkos reached in and grabbed Gees, pulling her into the wrecked corridor. Three other badly damaged robots were nearby. "Are you all right Gees?" he asked. "I'm okay, I'm okay. Just got a little panicked." she answered. "Um, I don't think you are. You're missing most of your chest there." She looked down and saw that most of the chest plating had been sheared off. Her internal wiring and parts were exposed. Mech fluid was running down, pooling on the deck plating. It was a mess. "We have to get to the repair center." She said. "The captain wants us there anyway."

The repair center was one of the places that didn't get hit hard. Placing it in the center was indeed a wise decision of the designers. But since the remnants of the crew came in, the floor looked like a pool of oil with little bits of gears, wires, and other robot parts. The white floor had become a dingy mess. Right now, Ratchet was sitting on Ultra Magnus' top half, activating the scanner. The repair center had Jukes, Notch, Maxx, Sarkos, Gees, Wildstorm, and Grimlock lying around damaged. Well, everybody except Sarkos was badly damaged. Wildstorm was talking to Jukes. "You mean out of twenty crew members, we have eight left?" "That's right boss." "Okay, scan's complete. Traans picked up a slew of things. We have a helicopter.." Ratchet began. "I'll take the helicopter." called out Wildstorm. "A fuel tanker.." continued Ratchet. Jukes raised his hand. "A very large land transport device of some kind. How about Ultra Magnus since it's so close to his original form." Ratchet said. "If it gets you off of me sooner." grunted Ultra Magnus, very unhappy about being used as a chair. "Okay, next is an aerial fighter with what looks like a vertical takeoff capability.." "I'll take that!" Gees yelled. "A vehicle with an internal combustion engine..." "Mine!" Maxx called. "A tractor of some sort..." Notch yelled out "Yeah!" "I'll take this multi-function craft. Sarkos, did you want this large artillery weapon?" "Okay..." came the reluctant reply. "Affirmative then, Grimlock did you want this armored artillery vehicle?" "If I can turn things into slag." "I'll take that as a yes." "Ratchet, I just decided that I don't want to be a big gun. Just doesn't suit me." Sarkos said. "Did you want something else?" "Not really." "I'll take that big gun, Ratchet." Grimlock volunteered. "Two forms it is."

Grimlock stepped out in his new robot mode. He was altered to become a tank and a really big gun. His right arm gleamed with a cannon. The other members of the crew stood around in their new forms, all their components replaced. "So, what's our first job on this rock cap?" Jukes asked. "Scouting the area. And look for that Cybertron signature we detected in orbit. You, Notch, Maxx, and Sarkos go out. Stay together, we don't know what happened to Earth. Ultra Magnus said that it's been radically changed since he was last here four centuries ago." The four robots headed to the airlock.

The city was totally dead. The buildings were imposing glass and steel monoliths, made on a titanic scale that dwarfed the travelers, who were rather big themselves, two stories tall. Of such a

gargantuan scale, it seemed inconceivable that humans could dream of them, let alone build them. Above, a black web hung like a net cast over the world. Their shadows had long since thrown the streets below into a perpetual night. Only at dead noon on a perfectly clear day was there even the slightest trickling of light onto the streets below. The streets themselves were filled with an insane wind, howling endlessly along empty streets. There seemed to be a perpetual drizzle of rain, coming from an unseen sky of endless gray clouds.. Pathways hung between the buildings, creating a web above them, combined with the fallen net, created an almost perfect darkness, only an occasional thin shimmering ray of light revealed the shockingly clean street. They had been walking for what seemed like hours, seeing only how bats see, echolocation. Then they came upon something different. The building was far taller than the others, and floodlights in the ground around it lit up the sky around it, adding an eerie look to the immense ebony pillar. The air around it crackled with energy, giving Sarkos the screaming heebie jeebies. Jukes, Notch, and Maxx were awestruck, and had a sort of glassy look in their optical lenses. Apparently, they did not sense the danger that Sarkos did. "Aw, man. That is the biggest thing I have ever seen on a planet." Jukes blurted. "Awesome." Maxx remarked. "I dare you to go inside. Unless you've got a yellow paint streak." Notch jabbed. The three argued while watching Sarkos look around the building. Sarkos disappeared from sight. "I found the door!" Sarkos called, peeking out from a corner. "Great!" the three said. They all rushed to the door. Sarkos bent down and touched the door, and it opened. It was small, so the quartet had to crawl through a dusty, but well lit, corridor. They turned off their echolocation modes. They emerged into an enormous room with many walkways suspended above. They were on the main floor, a glassy metal place. There were places in the floor that looked like they once connected into instruments. But now, it was a miniature desert, with metallic dust covering the floor in dunes. In the dead center of the room, a glass column held crystals. The crystals gave off an electric blue light that was harsh on the eyes if one stared at it too long. The air around them hummed and felt charged. They felt like they were standing on the precise spot a lightning bolt would hit, only the feeling was everywhere they went in the room. "I've got a bad feeling about this." Sarkos whispered. Then Jukes came in. He felt something recharging him, looked at the column of light, and immediately deduced that it was the source of the energy. "Come on guys! The thing's giving off Energon!" Jukes called out, running to the column. "Yeah man!" Notch and Maxx said. They rushed towards the column, then began to bath themselves in the energizing blue light. Sarkos walked slowly towards it, examining the light. "Mmm this is good." Jukes said, bathing in the warm light. "Jukes, something's wrong." Sarkos said, pointing at the column. "What is it plate face?" "This light is composed of millions of little crystals." "Who cares?" "I think it's raw energon. This much might fry something. Actually, I think it already did." Sarkos picked up a handful of the metal dust on the floor to illustrate. "So what? I don't care what it is unless I turn into a pile of junk because of it, ARRRGH!" "Jukes! What's wrong?" The other two asked, showing a little concern. "Sharp...stabbâ€¦ingâ€¦pain.. Feels..like my..circuits..are..fryinnngggg...." Jukes began twitching violently as the circuits within began to spark and fire uncontrollably. Maxx and Notch also began to display these symptoms, bodies flailing wildly as they lost control. Sarkos stood there, feeling helpless. The trio's convulsions began to get worse, sending body panels and assorted internal components flying. The trio gave one final shudder, then became still. Spark casings exposed, bodies stripped. Sarkos was

paralyzed with revulsion and horror as he stood and saw each of their sparks slowed to a halt, then implode. Sarkos stood there for a moment afterâ€¦ then fear finally got the best of him, and he ran, screaming, back to the Miraxus.

Ultra Magnus was salvaging what was left of his VIP quarters. He couldn't find his Matrix souvenir he got from New Lithone. That was the least of it. He couldn't find his personal notepad, journal, or a toy the Earthlings had made of him in the 1980's. //Must've fallen out in space.// he thought.

In a metal web, a ship hung. The rain turned to steam on it's still cooling hull. The web entangled it completely, a spider trapped in a web. The ship had the echo of a sleeping dragon, dangerous and unpredictable. The clueless observer would instantly see that this ship was not for peaceful purposes. No, it was a war cruiser. Across the nose, the Cybertronix text read "Pax Romana". Stainless metal, charred and violently vaporized, now gave the ship the look of a bird with an injured wing. From a hatch in the wreck, two small figures appeared. They were very similar in coloration, but very different in appearance. One was streamlined and smaller than the chunky large hulk next to him. "Ho boy, Cable's gonna die for this." said the small one. "Why?" the large one asked, lacking in intelligence. "That idiot got us into this mess, Trax" snapped the smaller one. Trax made the mistake of looking downward. A great distance leapt at him and grabbed his feeble brain. A staggering pit crisscrossed with beams of titanium awaited his fall. "AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!! Save me Jetstorm!" Trax screamed. Jetstorm sighed and shoved his brother off the ledge and yelled after him. "You can fly, remember?" After a moment, Trax popped back into view. "Wow, that's a long fall." Jetstorm sighed and grabbed his brother and pulled him back into the ship. "C'mon, we have to report this to Treadator."

Chapter 2: Chorus

The ship was buried deep within Earth. It stood out as an area of disorder among the orderly girders and wires that were the surface and the interior's lifeline. Metal lattices and tangled wires enveloped it in a web. The crash had melted some of the steel girders onto the hull. A fly in a spider's web, the ship would not be moving until it was untangled. The Decepticon captain wasn't happy about it either. Treadator was his name. And he was NOT in a pleasant mood. Treadator had had Cable working for him spying on the Miraxus. He had wanted to lure the Autobot ship closer, so he could blast them into oblivion. Furious for not noticing the weapons on the satellite, Treadator wanted somebody to punish for the mistake. The most convenient victim at the moment was Cable, his spy. Now, Cable stood before him, sniveling and whining about how useless he would be if he were dead. Treadator had reached his decision, but let Cable finish his bootlicking. "Cable, I have finally decided your fate." Treadator began, "Death would be too good for you. You deserve something worse. You will get a thousand lashes with the energy whip." Treadator smirked and felt pleased with himself. Megaplex whispered something into Treadator's audio sensors. The smirk on Treadator's face was replaced with a straight line. "Since the energy whips were lost in the crash, you will be put in an Iron Maiden." Megaplex shook his head no. Treadator slammed his fist down on the chair arm, expression changing to one of frustration. "Well Megaplex, what torture devices ARE working?" Treadator said unevenly, obviously trying to keep his temper. Megaplex shrugged and shook his head sadly. Treadator gave

Megaplex the evil eye turned to face Cable. Pondering for a tense moment, then a little longer to let the tension sink into Cable, an eerie smile crept across Treadator's face as he began to speak. "Your still living head will be mounted on a stand for my personal amusement." //Ha, let that sink into the little slagger.// Treadator thought. "What about my body?" whined Cable. "Who gives a Sharkticon's tooth what happens to your body? Dismantle him." Treadator commanded. He got up and walked back to his quarters. The sounds of Cable's screams were quickly absorbed by the soundproofing. Treadator had originally been a nasty little tyrant who ruled his crew with an iron fist. Now that he was a missile carrier, he was even nastier, if that was possible.

"Hey Jetstorm, do you think the cap's gotten meaner or it just me?" Megaplex asked Jetstorm. They were putting the remains of Cable's body in a storage locker. Megaplex was mounting Cable's head on a black box. "Umm, it's not you.." "Has anybody told him?" Megaplex connected the audio to the box. "Yeah, and she's currently decorating a wall of his quarters." "So that's where Sarin went. I feel honored to serve under Treadator." Jetstorm shrugged, dumping the last parts into the locker. Megaplex had finally finished connecting Cable's head to the black box. He regretted connecting the voice module though. "Great, we got a captain with a superiority complex." said Cable's head. Megaplex frowned. Jetstorm had a different, explosive reaction. "Shut up you idiot! You're the one who got us into this mess!" Jetstorm yelled, making Cable's audio sensors ring. "Jar." Jetstorm motioned to Megaplex. "Sure thing Jetstorm. Heh heh, that'll shut him up." Megaplex threw the plastic container to Jetstorm. Jetstorm caught the jar with one hand and quickly shoved Cable's head in it. "Hey!" Cable's head said, muffled by the jar. Jetstorm walked out of the storage room, with Megaplex close behind, shutting off the lights as he went out. Cable was alone in the dark.

Ratchet was waving a particle scanner around Sarkos. The repair bay was still a bit messy, but better than it was. He had had very little time to clean up. Ratchet finished up the scan and put the scanner away. "It looks like you get off at 100%." "But why did that thing affect Jukes and the others, but not me?" Sarkos asked. "It has to do with your armor. Cybertron armor absorbs high energy particles, simply because we use a lot of energy weapons. The Earthlings didn't fight much with energy weapons. Oh, by the way, the captain wanted me to show you something when you got back." He punched up a database on the display. "Gees found a Terran data storage device in the former cargo hold. It's a database of this city's facilities." "Maybe the thing is in there." "It's certainly worth a look. Describe it." "Well, it was about a kilometer high, a cylinder, had a blue glow, and produced massive amounts of energon." Sarkos said. "You mean this?" Ratchet pointed to the screen, a brief flicker, then it stopped at a diagram of a gargantuan energy generator. The entry was labeled John Langston Particle Fountain. "Traans, Read entry displayed." Ratchet said to the computer. The computer began, "[In 2389, Jonathan Ezra Langston conceived and designed the Particle Fountain. It was hailed as the solution to mankind's growing energy need. When it was completed in 2410, it took in 500 megawatts and put out 9,000,000 kilowatts. It was the most efficient energy source ever invented. It converts Zero Point Field energy to semi-stable energy crystalline solids. The crystals are stable enough not to undergo rapid dispersion, but unstable enough to give off a previously unstudied type of energy. It was discovered that the energy was the same type utilized by Cybertronians, known to them as Energon. The

Energon field it generated was able to be harnessed, as shown by the invention of the Energon Absorption Device in 2413. Links to other articles are in bold]] "We could use one of those on Cybertron to relieve the energy deficit." Ratchet commented. "What's that thing there?" Sarkos said, pointing to a strange symbol on the screen. Ratchet touched the symbol. The screen became filled with strange symbols, none of which the computer could translate. Then an even stranger thing happened. The computer said something. The unusual thing about it was that it wasn't the computer's voice. It was another, a strange one. This voice said " T_____e == G O D H R L". "We aren't alone here." Sarkos said, feeling a strange sense of familiarity connected to the voice and the symbol.

A lone figure surveyed the bleak landscape. Here was a rare spot. Sunlight and a clear sky blessed the figure, although the air was filled with mist, as it always was. The figure stood upon a mound of garbage, of all things. Wire, old screens, obsolete equipment, scraps of metal. That's the way he liked it. It was a junk yard after all. Zar, leader of the Metallis Junkions, surveyed the looming ruins of Earth. He had been here for 43 years. The humans had greeted them as welcome guests. Many years had passed with no events, the humans were overjoyed at seeing another alien species. In fact, the Junkions had helped the humans get past their fear of the unknown and prepare for another great leap into the inky void of space. Life was good. Then came the plague. They blamed it on the Junkions, of course, as they were the only alien species on the planet. The plague was horrible, it slowly and painfully turned humans into pile of ooze. A techno virus. At first, the humans begged him to find a cure. Then as the plague worsened, humans became increasingly hostile, attacking his fellow Junkions. He lost good friends to the rage, hate, and fear created by the plague, and killing Cybertrons was not an easy feat. The plague eventually took its toll. The entire human race went insane before it ended. Over five hundred quadrillion humans, dead. But the humans weren't extinct, not by far. They had established colonies on other worlds before a period of anarchy gripped the humans, but what has become of them was a mystery. Zar blamed himself. He brought the plague upon them, he killed a whole world. He could've left this world of sorrow long ago, but he felt that he had a responsibility to look after mankind's legacy. But now that a large cargo crate had smashed into the ship's power center, he couldn't leave if he wanted to. Marion, a young female Junkion, approached Zar. "What's wrong?" Marion asked. "Look around Marion. What do you see?" Zar replied. "I see a world of glass and metal." "There is the problem. Nothing is alive. I remember when this world was filled with joyous laughter, bright smiles, and happy people. Now it is nothing but an empty world. Nothing grows. Not even a weed." Zar kicked a piece of metal in disgust. "But what about the Biodomes and the Wraithland? They are filled with natural wonders." Marion said, determined to try and cheer up her leader. "Bah! The Biodomes are nothing more than artificially maintained environments, and the Wraithland a myth." Zar spat, kicking a broken TV for good measure.

Cleaning was the worst. Gees hated it. But, Wildstorm wanted to get access to the cargo hold as soon as possible. She picked up a large chunk of scrap that had come from the corridor and threw it aside with the rest of the junk she had cleared. To her delight, the hatch had become accessible. She opened it up with some difficulty, figuring it was jammed somehow. Wrenching the hatch open, she climbed down into the darkness, carrying a repair kit. It was very dark

inside, but a few remaining energon cubes leaked a dim blue light. Half-shadows and vague outlines could be made out, but nothing substantial. She turned on her echo-locator, the familiar subtle kik-kik-kik of the device began sending and receiving information. She got the shape of the cargo hold, but nothing else. The floor was filled with rubble. She bent down and opened the repair kit. She got out the lantern and turned it on, revealing a charred room. The rubble of the cargo that had been strapped to the deck was left. Charred and warped walls stank of energon. "Hard to believe that the stuff that gives us life can do this." Gees muttered to herself. "Hey, who's there?" a voice moaned. "Is that you Ironfire?" "Who did you think it is?" "Nevermind." "What took you so long to get here?" "Lots of junk in the way." Gees helped Ironfire up and embraced him. Ironfire was still disorientated and was adjusting his head, trying to make sense of things. "Where in the Matrix are we?" "Would you believe Earth?" "No. Earth isn't supposed to be that hard."

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[[SHIP LOG 49569-2A-7591Z]] [[M: 1,024 bytes]] [[DT: ERROR OCCURED IN
COMPONENT 59621-C. UNABLE TO COMPUTE DATE]] [[ID: TREADATOR]] [[SHIP:
PAX ROMANA]] [[BEGIN LOG: EDITOR ONLINE; VIDEOFEED OFF]] "Why does my
crew have to aggravate me so? The sheer incompetence... They do
nothing but sit around the oiling machine and talk. All day this goes
on. It's a wonder that this ship is still in one piece. The
[[EXPLETIVE DELETED]] ship needs repair, and at the rate they're
going, it'll take all [[EXPLETIVE DELETED]] vorn! If we ever get off
this [[EXPLETIVE DELETED]] piece of slag, I'm gonna personally see
that their [[EXPLETIVE DELETED]] [[EXPLETIVE DELETED]] are put in the
scrap heap. Hey, what the [[EXPLETIVE DELETED]] is that [[EXPLETIVE
DELETED]] light? If it's one of those idiots.. [[END LOG]]
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[[SENSOR LOG 29999-1I-4711B]] [[M: 145 bytes]] [[DT: ERROR OCCURED IN
COMPONENT 59621-C. UNABLE TO COMPUTE DATE]] [[ID: EXTERIOR SENSOR
#3914]] [[SHIP: PAX ROMANA]] [[BEGIN LOG]] [[TIMER NOT FUNCTIONING]]
0.24 RADS NONE 30 C 21.5 [[TIMER NOT FUNCTIONING]] 1,000,000
RADS 1 DETECTED- ID: UNKNOWN FORM 100 C ERROR. : AMBIENT ENERGY IS
ABOVE SCALE.
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Chapter 3: Preludes "What the galv is going on?" bellowed Treadator, kicking the junk out of his way as he stomped through the ship. Some of the smaller Decepticons got crushed under his big feet, being too slow to get out of the way. He shoved the hatch aside and looked out into the blinding light. Something strange was going on. Not wanting to burn out his optics, he switched to FC mode. A faint outline showed up in the false colors of the FC circuits. It was a sphere. Treadator pulled out his gun and pointed at the object. "Freeze or you're dead!!" he yelled. The thing then disappeared as suddenly as it appeared. "This is not my day." mumbled Treadator, shoving a crew member into a wall as he stomped back into the main corridor.

The young Junkion rushed over to Zar. He was clutching a strange object. It was a sphere with two gray handles on the sides. The sphere gave a glimpse of a crystal that refracted the darkness within it. The Junkion handed over to Zar. Zar turned it over and over in his hands. "Hmm, this looks familiar. But I can't remember..." he said. Then his eyes widened in remembrance, "The Matrix. It looks dead, like this world.." "What's it doing here, Junk-Zar?" the finder asked. "I do not know, young one."

Wildstorm was in the command center, checking over the cargo list, seeing what was lost in the explosion that blew out the hold. The

nice thing about Autobot cargo ships is that not much could be smuggled aboard. The invention of cargo detection scanners had been a bane to contraband. Made Wildstorm's job a lot easier.

----- [[CARGO LISTING FOR THE Autobot Cargo Ship MIRAXUS]] 1
PROTOTYPE HARMONIC DESTABILIZER (Se3) 1 PROTOTYPE TRANS-TACHYON PULSE
DRIVE (Se3) 10 MAXIMAL Transwarp CELLS (Vo4) 15 MAXIMAL STASIS PODS
(Fr1) [CAUTION! PROTOFORMS] 10 AUTOBOT BODY CHASSISES (Cg2) 1500
ENERGON CUBES (Vo1) 100 LASER PULSE RIFLES (Cg6) 10 AUTOBOT
PERSONALITY MATRIXES (Fr1) 1 LARGE NEW LITHONIAN SILICON CRYSTAL
(Fr10) 2 ESCAPE PODS (Cg10) GALVATRON(Pr1) [STASIS UNIT]
SOUNDWAVE(Pr1) [STASIS UNIT] SPIKE'S BODY SUIT FOR FORTRESS MAXIMUS
(Ar4) 15 MICROMASTERS (Cg4) [DECEASED] THE CYBERTRON MATRIX OF
LEADERSHIP (Ar0) Page 1 Page2 Page 3 2 of 10 pages Key: Ar- Artifact
Cg- Cargo Fr- Fragile cargo. Pr- Prisoner. Se- Sensitive cargo. Vo-
Volatile. Numbers indicated level of precaution to be taken. Higher
numbers mean less precautions. !!A 0 means to protect the item with
your lives.!!

----- Wildstorm's eyes widened at the last entry on the list.
//What! I thought the Matrix was lost over a century ago. Why'd it
show up now? Must be a glitch in the cargo detection scanners.// "Hey
Ultra Magnus! What exactly happened to the Matrix?" Wildstorm asked
out of curiosity. "Well, I don't know if I can remember it all.
Rodimus Prime opened it when Cybertron was threatened by Unicron.
Then Optimus Prime exhausted its power to end an ancient plague that
had returned. Then when Prime came back to Cybertron, it
disappeared." "Did anybody know where it went?" "No, just rumors,
nothing more."

Sarkos tossed and turned in his bunk. He was sleeping fitfully.
Another dream. Inside his tortured mind, he was running. From
something. A bright light appeared before him and he couldn't move
any further. A great face appeared in the light. Then the light began
to coalesce into a body. It appeared to be a Cybertron. But something
told him that this wasn't a Cybertron. The face looked as old as the
cosmos, and the eyes shined with a wisdom beyond this mortal coil.
Sarkos realized that this was Primus. Then Unicron appeared next to
Primus. The mere sight of the Dark God made Sarkos' soul tremble.
Then the two began fighting, and they fought for what seemed billions
of years, then the two gods dissipated into a planet. The planet
looked familiar. It was Cybertron. Then Primus's hands and face
appeared in the mist. The hands were making something. It looked like
the Matrix. When it was finished, he handed it to a Cybertron that
had formed below him. Primus spoke. "This, the Matrix of Knowledge,
is my final gift to you, my children." said the sorrow filled voice,
"It is filled with the wisdom of those who have gone before, and
whoever it chooses will be your leader. In your most dark hour, the
light within will give you strength. Until all are one." As Primus
spoke the final words, he began to disappear into the void, and the
Matrix began to glow with Primus' wisdom. Then Sarkos saw the history
of the Matrix. The good rulers, and the bad. Then the dark times
during the Great War. The destruction of Unicron's physical body. It
ended when Optimus Prime sacrificed the last remnants of Matrix's
energy to end the the Hate plague. Then the Matrix grew dark, empty
of the ancient knowledge it once contained. Primus was truly dead. He
woke up. Another dream. This time, the dream was horrifyingly real.
He was strapped to a table. A bright light from above blinded him.
Strange voices filled the air. The voices began to blur and

synchronize. In the end, it was a single voice. It was speaking to him in some alien language. It showed pictures from his memory. The images showed an ancient conflict that he had watched in a records archive. It showed Megatron and Optimus Prime fighting at Autobot City on Earth. Then the image changed to another recording, that of the first Great War. Thousands of Autobots died in the Decepticon's first attack. The voice spoke, as if asking a question. When Sarkos failed to answer, the voice repeated the phrase, but in an angrier tone. Again, Sarkos couldn't answer. The voice said something different, and a wave of pain wracked Sarkos, waking him up.

Ratchet stared at the computer screen. He was searching for a reason why Sarkos has those strange visions. When Sarkos had told him of the vision about Primus, Ratchet had begun to worry. //These "dreams" aren't natural.// he thought. He stopped on an entry that struck him as being odd. [[ASTRAL PLANE ORIGIN: Earth DEFINITION: The place where dreams are said to be experienced. According to Earthling mythology, a being's soul is released to the Astral plane when the being is sleeping.]] //Hmm, much like our Matrix. All sparks rest there. But traveling there without shuffling off the material plane is the tricky part.// Ratchet went to the entry on the Matrix out of curiosity. [[MATRIX OF LEADERSHIP The Matrix of Leadership is an ancient artifact from Cybertron. It chooses leaders, and seems to be sentient. The full scope of its powers is unknown. Defunct Cybertrons' sparks are believed to be stored in it. Rodimus Prime saw what seemed to be a vision from it, but he had been severely damaged just prior. It was once called "The Eye of Primus".]] //Maybe, just maybe, Sarkos' dreams are related to the Matrix. Hmm.//

In the semi-trashed sensor control room, Wildstorm, Grimlock, and Ultra Magnus looked over the holographic model of Earth. The planet seemed to be covered in cities and various utilities. The sheer size of the buildings was amazing. "I don't understand. How could all this happen in just four centuries?" Ultra Magnus said. "I have no clue, Magnus." Wildstorm answered. "Maybe the presence of Autobot City and the Ark have something to do with it." commented Grimlock. "How?" asked Wildstorm. "They might've studied the parts from them and accelerated their technology." "What's this?" Ultra Magnus said, pointing to a deep hole shown on the hologram. "Computer, identify that landmark." [[Landmark is called the Deep. It served as an access route to the interior of Earth, where minerals are mined and transported to the surface. It extends to the now cooling core of the planet.]] "How did they avoid the gravity problem?" [[Anti-gravity field generators were installed the length of the shaft.]] "Hmm."

In another place, in a deep recess of the planet, a cult of humans gathered around a cylinder container a person who was perhaps the most dangerous entity alive. The insane and powerful Decepticon despot, Galvatron. Galvatron was unaware of anything going on, the stasis chamber doing its job efficiently and quietly. Humans had dragged him to a chamber that appeared to be a temple of some sort. The walls were made of rock and decorated with pictographs. Below him, humans were groveling and bowing. A priest stood in front of the container, and began to speak. "People of the Kathlik, here me! This is the long awaited sign from God! We will bow and pray that this emanuele can cure us of the devil's plague." The priest was fascinated with the stasis container's controls. He couldn't make out what they said, but the big red button seemed important. In reality,

that button was labeled "Stasis Field Off". Not knowing any better, the priest pushed it. The quiet whirring of the stasis unit, audible over the silence of the gathered, stopped. A moment passed. An insane laughter began to emanate from the container. A blinding light erupted from the top of the stasis unit and vaporized a chunk of the rock ceiling. A purple hand jabbed through the glass view port. Everyone looked up and saw what their gift from god had come to life. Some crossed themselves, others prayed, and still more bowed in awe. The stasis unit rocked back and forth for a moment, a ripping sound was heard coming from within, and the eerie laughter continued. Purple fingers suddenly punctured the heavily armored front of the stasis unit, ripping a shriek of metal. The muted roar of the crowd stopped as the congregation stared in stupefied awe, as the fingers began to tear open the diamond-based armor. The laughter continued as the armor was peeled to the sides of the stasis unit. A foul smelling mist spilled forth from the rift, and clung to Galvatron as he stepped out of the world. A demonic imposing figure, his laughter unnerved many. People began to run from the temple screaming. Galvatron turned his attention to the priest who was staggering away from him in horror. Galvatron picked up the priest in his hand. The priest was shocked into utter numbness at the sight of Galvatron's evil smirk. Blood red optics and a steely gaze considered the priest. Then, in a gravelly, utterly dark voice, Galvatron spoke. "Thank you for releasing me. Now it's time for you to die." The priest's screams and sickening crunch were music to Galvatron's ears as he crushed him with his bare hand. Examining the priest's blood on his hands, he smirked, and bellowed, "It feels good to be back." Then the laughter began again as he began to fire his fusion cannon at the retreating crowd.

Treadator's mood was better. Partially because he had just come from the simulator, but mostly because they had found a relative of his. He righted the stasis container and wiped off some of the condensation from the glass. Soundwave's face betrayed no emotion as usual. Just a cold expression. Treadator smiled the way a child does when he gets a new toy. He pressed the Off button and took off the glass. Soundwave pulled out his gun and pointed at Treadator. "Relax, I'm a Decepticon." Treadator said, pushing Soundwave's gun down slowly. "I understand. What is your rank?" Soundwave replied in his monotone voice. "Captain." "Is there one of higher rank than you?" "No." "Then as Second in command of the Decepticons, I am taking command of this vessel." "I really don't think so." "Why is that? I am of higher rank than you." "Because if you insist on taking over this ship, then I'm going to have to insist on blowing you apart." Soundwave looked coolly at Treadator's gun pointing at his midsection. "I will comply with your wishes."

Stormrider was technically a combination of Trax and Jetstorm, but the two twins could combine into a single larger robot. This was something the Decepticons had invented, one of the few good things they've contributed to Cybertron culture. Stormrider was out scouting around. As fast as he could go, he had already covered 100 square miles already. He looked like a jet with short stubby wings and a set of treads on the bottom in vehicle mode. He stopped suddenly when he found a hole. This hole was large enough for a small city to fit on top of it. Stormrider transformed into his robot mode and walked over to the edge and looked down. A powerful sense of distance overcame him, the hole went down for miles. Straight down. The wind was horrendous near the edge, because of air currents coming up from it. It was a maddening howl. At times, it seemed to call things out.

Stormrider just shrugged it off, though it was starting to creep him out. "Glad I'm not afraid of heights." Stormrider muttered. He picked up a scrap piece of metal and tossed it in. He strained to listen for the sound of it hitting the bottom. He waited for about an hour and a half, then finally, he heard something. It sounded like somebody talking. "You're going to pay for that!" it said, the echo splashing off the steel girders and glass. A bright flash came, then shot through the air past Stormrider. It was a fusion blast. He took off as fast as he could, transforming on the run.

Galvatron rubbed his head. That scrap of metal made quite a dent in his head. He was going to kill whoever did that. But something strange was going on inside of his head. Early memories were surfacing. Anger, hate, greed, Megatron. Galvatron shook it off, burying it again. He flew up out of the deep and looked around for his next victim. All he saw were huge buildings that seemed to be used for manufacturing things.

Ratchet was trying to build an Energy Field Absorption Device for Sarkos. Sarkos was in critical condition due to low energon reserves. If Ratchet was right, then anyone who has an Earth vehicle mode already has one, but not Sarkos. He had to be very careful or... "Slag." He slammed down the tools and threw off the magnification goggles. "Slipped again." He had been so sure he could do this. It'd be easier if he could just find one. //That gives me an idea.// he thought, and rushed out of the repair bay. Meanwhile, Sarkos had the human equivalent of a fever, and fevered dreams as well.

The dream had begun with him falling for what seemed to be miles, ending with a sudden collision with metal ground. The scenery blurred and shifted into a haze. Then a faint laughter began. The laughter began to get louder and it was the laughter of the insane. A face began to appear in the haze, and he felt nothing but cold hatred for that face. It was Galvatron's. He had destroyed many Autobots and Decepticons, so many that the Cybertron race faced extinction. Optimus Prime had ordered that a great complex be built, the Creation Matrix. It was to create a new breed of Cybertrons, the Maximals. But the Decepticons demanded that a similar structure be built for them. By then, the combined forces of the Autobots and the Decepticons had captured Galvatron and imprisoned him. Predaking took the reins of leadership and had the Pit built, and called the new faction the Predacons in his honor. But millennia of war and hate were not easily forgotten, and the new races broke out fighting. Thus happened the Great War of the Predacons. The Autobots and Decepticons did not take sides in it, because they were weary of fighting and had had their fill of bloodshed. The older races beseeched the younger ones to stop, that the ancient hate was over. The war lasted for all of a vorn, ending with a ravaged Cybertron and many dead. The dream continued. His view shifted to a large chamber, the Particle Fountain. The top had been blown away and the column of crystals were exposed. He had the Matrix with him and was standing on a railing above the Fountain itself. Raw energy crackled in the air and made it hum with electric intensity. Galvatron stood on the railing opposite him, pointing his fusion cannon at the energon. He fired. Then the queerest thing happened, time seemed to slow down. Sarkos leapt from the railing into the column of energon, hoping to stop the blast before it destroyed the planet. He took the blast, but fell into the crystals. The crystals began to shatter into millions of shards, the sound being much like a thousand mirrors shattering. The energy field that both fed and suspended the crystals seized Sarkos, suspending

him inside the Fountain with millions of energon crystal shards whirling around him. The energon field inside the Fountain was too much even for Sarkos' Cybertron plating. He began to feel unimaginable pain as he was ripped into atoms. He could see nothing but the blue light of the energon, and it began to get brighter and brighter until..... darkness. He opened his eyes to see Ratchet standing over him. "You should be alright now that there's a Energy Field Absorption chip in you." Ratchet asked. "Sure, okay." He replied. Ratchet went back to work on something or another, leaving Sarkos to recuperate.

"Sir, we've located the Autobot ship!" came the message. Treadator sighed. Couldn't have they waited until he was done with his oil bath? But, it was important. He got up out of his oil pool and dripped over to the console. He punched the ON button. "Where is it?" he asked. "About five miles SW from here." the tech bot promptly replied. "Good, tell Jetstorm to do a flyby of that area." "Yes sir. Rook out." The screen went blank and Treadator went back to his oil bath.

Stormrider was in pain. The pain had been served by Galvatron. He had hidden from the tyrant when he fired on him. But Galvatron found him anyway, proceeding to incapacitate him and rip a few parts out. Right now, Stormrider was on the ground, dripping oil from the holes in him. Galvatron stood over him, gloating. "Tell me why I shouldn't kill you now." Galvatron said, leveling his cannon at him. Stormrider looked up. "Because you can't catch us." he said as he split into his two components, Trax and Jetstorm. The two immediately transformed. Trax rammed Galvatron's legs, causing him to fall. Jetstorm strafed the ground, making rows of little bullet/laser holes up and down Galvatron's body. After which, the twins made like an atom and split, leaving Galvatron far, far behind. "I'm gonna kill those three." Galvatron moaned. //Why not all of them?// the wind seemed to call. This made sense to Galvatron, so he decided to do just that. So he began to wander around searching for a way to destroy this entire miserable planet.

In the multitude of mining caverns that the Deep housed, humans dwelled. In the span of just 40 years, they had been reduced to a group of clans afraid of the outside world. The remnants of the Kathlik clan were huddled outside of Clan Ikar's stronghold. The Ikar's leader was conferring with the current leader of the Kathlik. "A great metal man killed our Pope, then started to kill the masses." said the Kathlik man. "Just like the ones that visited us ages ago." Johan, the Ikar's leader. A story said that once, a race of metal men fought on Earth, one side called themselves the Autobots. The other called themselves the Decepticons. They were fighting over something called Energon. Then they disappeared off-world. Sometimes they'd come back for a little bit. But then they were gone for good.

Ironfire studied the planet's image. //Mostly metal. Weird.// he thought //According to the geological charts taken in 2005, there isn't enough metals to do all this. Hmm, if they invented some sort of transmuting device, then it could be possible. Hey wait, where's the Moon?// Wildstorm looked in to check on him, then walked away, thinking about how Ironfire was a hard worker. He headed to his quarters to think, passing the repair bay. Inside, Sarkos was being examined, again. "Is this really necessary?" Sarkos said, eyeing the really pointy tool that Ratchet was holding. "Yup." Ratchet popped

open a panel in the nether regions, revealing the wiring and circuits. Ratchet used the tool on a couple of wires, then closed it. Just about then, the ship was hit by laser fire. "Oh slag." swore Sarkos.

Outside, the Decepticons had declared open season on the Miraxus and her crew. Most of the officers were there, except Trax and Jetstorm of course. Treadator was in his terror tank form, getting his missile into place while the rest of the officers were blasting at the hatches.

Wildstorm took one look outside the hatch and closed it before he got hit. Grimlock and Ironfire stood behind him, anxious to get rid of some Decepticons. "Suggestions?" Wildstorm said. "Let's burst out of the side." Ironfire suggested. "I say we go out and slag 'em." growled Grimlock. "Okay then. I have a plan."

The Miraxus' hull began to creak under the strain of lasers. Treadator was almost ready to fire his missile and commanded the officers to get away from the ship. In the last seconds of the countdown, Wildstorm burst out of the side of the ship, both guns blazing. He landed on Treadator, knocking the missile platform up. The missile fired, rocketing through the sky. Grimlock and Ironfire came through the hatches, shooting down the Decepticons, who were still trying to react to Wildstorm. Then the rest of the Autobots came out of the ship, punching the stunned 'cons. The fight went on intensely for a few moments, with the Decepticons beginning to win. The two sides didn't know what was going on. First a bright light in the sky, then the green barrier. Now they were hanging in mid air by metal tentacles, and passed over with a green fire. Then darkness as time stopped and ceased to work right. Awakening in their ship, the Autobots began to busy themselves with assessing the damage. The Decepticons, too, found themselves transported back to their ship, bewildered and unsure of reality.

Sarkos was unconscious, a necessary thing when somebody's doing maintenance on you. But his mind was still working and thinking. His mind was wondering about Earth, how it had become a metal wasteland. Something clicked inside and he saw a natural landscape, made of dirt and vegetation. There were crystals bandied about the mountains and ground. There were also animals, and a waterfall. There was also something else, something out of place. A Maximal ship. Sarkos could tell that she was badly damaged and would never fly again. His view suddenly shifted to a barren place, encircled with lava. A ship, Predacon from the looks of it, was in the middle of the crater. He looked up to see a gigantic object in the sky, as big as a moon. It consisted of a ring with a cone right in the middle of it. He had a sense of an impending disaster. It then the thing shot out a bright light. The sudden appearance of light startled Sarkos. He was conscious again. Ratchet waved his hand in front of Sarkos' face. "Are you alright?" "I'm okay."

Chapter 4: Cleft In Twain In Treadator's quarters, Treadator was taking a nice long oil bath. Cable (or rather what was left of him.) saw this as an opportunity to try and get back on the captain's good side. "Psst!" Treadator looked casually towards the glass that contained Cable's head. He turned away, uninterested. Cable was annoyed at this. He suddenly figured out how to get Treadator's attention. "HEY MORON!" he yelled. Treadator rose out of the oil bath. He suddenly realized he had done a bad thing. Treadator strode

across the room and looked Cable straight in the eye. "You'd better apologize to me at once or I will think of something even worse to do to you." Cable was suddenly feeling very small. "I'm sorry." Treadator walked back to his bath. "Hey! While you're up, I something to tell you." Treadator shook his head in disgust. He looked over his shoulder at Cable. "What?" "I know something that could be really useful to you." "Tell me know or I'll" "You'll what? Tell the galaxy that I helped those Predacons steal the Earthlings' Voyager disk? But it doesn't work when there's nobody to tell." "Fine, I'll melt your body down into slag." "Go ahead, it seems like I don't need it anymore." Cable was beginning to irritate Treadator. "ARR...Fine, if you tell me, I will have your body reassembled and you will be forgiven." "No matter what it is?" "Don't try my patience, traitor." That was a sure sign that Treadator was desperate, Cable chuckled to himself. He had a real doozy. "The Miraxus was carrying Galvatron. AND we detected a Cybertron energy signatures coming from the planet." Treadator flicked on the intercom. "Megaplex, reassemble Cable's body immediately." Treadator smiled in a way that made Cable feel like he had just tipped the cosmic scales off balance. A cold, chilling feeling came over Cable.

Galvatron had demolished several buildings with a single blast from his arm cannon. That had ceased to be fun after the first three. So now he built a Decepticon army out of the rubble. They were just piles of rocks really, but to his insane mind, they were his personal army. "Attack!" He commanded, pointing to a bunch of girders that were still standing. He saw those girders as Autobots. When he saw that his "army" wasn't moving, he got mad. "ATTACK!" Still nothing. "ATTACK BLAST YOU!" A single rock fell from one of the piles. "YOU'RE ALL USELESS LUMPS OF SLAG!" He screamed, not knowing the truth behind his words. When the rocks still didn't move, he went wild and shot every one of them with the fusion cannon on his arm. Galvatron never knew what happened. He was knocked offline by a white light.

He awoke entangled in webbing. The room was dark as night. There was a single bright light shining on his face. That was making him uncomfortably hot. Out of nowhere, a voice began to talk to him, in some, unknown, unfathomable tongue. "Show yourselves!" he roared. The voice multiplied to a thousand conversations, and then ceased. A sudden light filled the void of the room, revealing no edges or end. "NOOOOOoooooooooooo...."

"We still need to find that Cybertron energy signature. And find our prisoners that we lost." Wildstorm said. The crew was assembled on the bridge-turned-command-center. "I need volunteers to go and look for it. Two to be precise. The Decepticons know where we are and may attack at any time, so I need as many of you as I can spare to stay and guard. So, who will go?" Ironfire spoke up. "I'll go. It will give me a chance to examine the planet." "If Ironfire's going, I'll go too." Gees volunteered. "Okay. Ratchet will give you ES Sensors before you go. Be careful, we once knew Earth, but this one is alien to us." Mindscapes are a reflection of the mind that it comes from, much like a dream. The Mindscape of Galvatron was distorted, like a Cubist painting. This was how Galvatron viewed reality, through the eyes of insanity. The personality that was Galvatron wasn't really defined until Unicron's destruction. Before that, he was merely Megatron with an immensely powerful body that Unicron had given him. While Megatron had been grateful for being saved from the void, he did not like to be controlled. Even though Megatron had been given a new body, and a new army, Unicron demanded a favor in return;

"Destroy the Autobot Matrix of Leadership." Unicron had only used Megatron to further his own agenda, because the Matrix was the only thing that could destroy his physical body. Megatron had resisted at first, but was punished via a psychic link, through which Unicron could inflict pain and tell Megatron what he was to do. Giddy with power, Megatron and his army of Sweeps pursued the Autobots that had fled Earth with the Matrix. They landed on the Planet of Junk, residence of the Junkions. The Sweeps obliterated Ultra Magnus, who was the current commander of the Autobots. Megatron took the Matrix to his master, and tried to use it against Unicron. It failed, for Megatron. A young Autobot named Hotrod wrested control of the Matrix from Megatron, and managed to use it to destroy Unicron before he could devour Cybertron. But now, Galvatron was confused, his mind was a haze. Something was happening to him. He was unconscious, but he was in his mindscape. A blur formed in the mindscape, and gradually formed Megatron. Megatron was not small, he was the former leader of the Decepticon Army. He commanded respect, unlike Galvatron, who ruled through fear. Megatron had a large gun barrel strapped to his right arm, and another on his back. He looked vaguely like a Nazi Soldier from World War II. "I demand to know why my sleep was interrupted, Galvatron." Megatron said coldly. He did not like his younger counterpart. Galvatron had made too many mistakes. "I don't know, weakling, but you shall soon sleep forever." replied Galvatron. The two began to fight for control. For awhile, it was stalemate, but then Galvatron managed to get the upper hand. Megatron was surprised to find that Galvatron was beginning to look transparent. Galvatron was fading away. As he was, the mindscape changed. It was Cybertron, dominated by Decepticons. Megatron's vision of what should be. "Peace through tyranny." he said, and a sinister laughing began to echo through the mindscape.

He awoke in the very same chamber that he was before. This time there was the sensation of being in space, the very view showing a vast, dense starfield. He had the feeling of spinning with his restraints. "Who dares chain me like an animal?" Megatron demanded, his voice, old and raspy. The voice again, then many. Megatron's great cunning began to pick apart his situation. Yes, intimidation would be a wise next move, assuming they are capable of such emotion. "I demand release." He sneered. The voices whispered for a moment, then howled and then it was blankness. "Any sign of a Cybertron?" Ironfire asked. They had traced the signal to a junkyard. Their scanners had started to go berserk, making them useless. "Well, there's you an' me.." started Gees, in a half joking and half romantic sort of way. "I know, but there's not really time for that. We need to find out if these Cybertron signatures are real." he said, embracing Gees. "Oh alright." She started rummaging through the junk, finding books, toys, and a lot of junk.

Nearby, Treadator and Cable were also searching the junkyard. They were trying to do two things. Trying to collect parts to repair the timer component (the error messages were getting annoying.) and find those beings behind the Cybertron energy signatures. "You say THIS is where the Energy signatures were centered?" Treadator demanded of Cable. "Erm, yes." If Cable could sweat, he would be dripping. He didn't expect to be dragged into the search. He should have, but didn't. //Oh well.// he thought. They turned a corner and ran into Gees and Ironfire. The two parties were surprised by each other. They were even more surprised when about twenty Junkions popped up out of the junk piles pointing guns at them. "Freeze." came the ice cold words of Junk-Zar.

The crew of the Pax Romana was going about business as usual. They were trying to fix the ship, untangle the metal girders that held it in place in the ground. Stormrider was in charge, and on the bridge directing the work when he heard an unfamiliar voice behind him. "Where in the Universe am I?" said the grating gravely voice. Stormrider turned around to see Megatron, who still looked like Galvatron, and fear began to flood his mind. "Uh, uh, uh.." he managed to stammer. "Answer me." Megatron commanded, his voice changed from the last meeting with Stormrider. "Uh, the puh-pax Romana. I am i-i-in command at the moment. Puh-please state your name and rank." "I am Megatron, Ruler of the Decepticons." This scared Stormrider even worse, because Megatron had been dead for centuries since Starscream shoved him off into space. "B-but y-y-you're..." "Dead?" Megatron finished for him, then continued. "Hardly. As a fleshling once said :Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated." Megatron pondered his words for a moment, then said "Hmm, how strange I should quote a fleshling."

Chapter 5: Fugue

Seeing isn't believing, unlike what most people believe. Take the Junkion ship. Before it crashed on Earth, it was a space ship. Not a pretty one, but it functioned, and to the Junkions, that's what mattered. When it crashed on Earth, it crashed into an ancient toxic waste dump that had had the framework of a new building over it. The ship was buried under hazardous dirt, iron alloy, and various other rubble. Over the years, the humans had been dumping garbage on the ship, partially because the Junkions were there, but mostly because it was a contaminated site. The filthy (by our standards, not theirs) interior of the Junkion's ship smelled of rust, oil, anti-freeze, and several other chemicals that would kill a human upon smelling it. Scraps of metal and plastic littered the place. The corridors, if viewed by humans, were as tall as two story buildings and the floor was impossible to travel through. To a human, the command-center-come-throne-room would be a vast vault. This was all to a human scale. To the Junkions, beings that were as big as a building, this was normal. The throne room held guards at the exits and at the throne, where Junk-Zar sat. In front of him were Treadator and Cable, stripped of all weapons and in shackles. Junk-Zar had the Matrix smack in the middle of his chest. He wanted to know how and when these Cybertrons got on this planet. "How did you get on this planet?" he demanded. Cable started to open his mouth, but Treadator stopped him with a slight kick. "We were shot down by the Autobots. We were only on a survey mission, weaponless." Treadator lied. If he could get the Junkions on their side, they could leave the Autobot's cooling carcasses on this planet. "I see. And what's the name of your captain?" "I am the captain." "And these Autobots. Have they done such things before?" Seizing the opportunity, Cable quickly helped Treadator. "Yes, numerous times. They're wanted on Cybertron for piracy, murder, and other atrocities." "Take them away. Bring the other two." //If these Autobots are so horrible, lets have a look at them.// Junk-Zar thought. Gees and Ironfire were brought before Junk-Zar. He looked them up and down carefully. The male seemed to fit the bill, but he wasn't sure about the female. Maybe they were like the Earthling's "Bonnie & Clyde". "The Decepticons have accused you of shooting down their ship. Did you?" Ironfire hung his head. Gees said "We don't know if they got shot or not. We were knocked out." "Hmm. Then why are you on Earth as well?" Gees answered again. "We crashed after we got shot. Most of our crew was lost into space."

There's not much left of our ship." "So did the Decepticons shot you down?" "No, it was these little satellites in orbit. From what I was told, we lost control and crashed right into the Decepticon ship, making both ships go down." "Take them back to their cell. I will think about this. In the morning, I will decide."

The Junkions discussed the matter among themselves. There were two schools of thought on the matter. One side thought that the Decepticons were telling the truth. The others thought that the Autobots were telling the truth. But each side tried to convince the other that they were right. Brawls resulted, but were quickly quelled by Junk-Zar. But they still whispered the matter among themselves. It was a subtle poison that quickly seeped into the Junkions.

Morning. The promise that something new will happen. With the guarantee that at least something different will happen. Junk-Zar had the Junkions convene in a great hall. This was an enormous room, even by Junkion standards. The four prisoners were guarded closely, with shackles and chains. Great lanterns were hung to light it as bright as day, yet some shadows lurked furtively in far flung corners. Junk-Zar stood in the middle, in his finest form, Marion next to him. The crowd grew still. "My friends. These trespassers have given us conflicting stories. They seem to conflict. One is a lie, the other the truth. I have weighed each of their statements with great consideration. I have decided that the Decepticons are telling the truth." The crowd went into an uproar at the decision. Some were elated that they were right. Others were dissatisfied, crying out injustice. Junk-Zar motioned for Marion to state the sentence. "The Autobots are to be executed for their crimes immediately. Captain Treadator has the honor. Unshackle him." Treadator smirked as a they undid his chains. He was going to savor every moment of this. He was given his gun and he slowly raised it. Things suddenly got out of hand when Autobot sympathizer shot Cable, knocking him over. From there, things got worse. The Junkions went crazy as lines were suddenly drawn and fights broke out. Somebody freed Ironfire and Gees and gave their equipment back. Treadator took this opportunity and shot Junk-Zar. He collapsed. Marion rushed to Junk-Zar's side. "Are you okay?" Marion asked. Junk-Zar smiled weakly. "I now know I was wrong. Take the Matrix and go with the Autobots. I'm sorry Marion." with that, Junk-Zar died. Marion took the Matrix and quickly put it inside her chest cavity. All around them, a low deep rumbling came. The Junkion ship wasn't up to the stress of that much fighting and began to collapse. The crowd began to flee, fighting in the corridors. Marion was trying to catch a glimpse of Ironfire and Gees. She saw them. "Ironfire! Gees! Wait!" The two stopped and grabbed her out of the way just as the roof caved in, carrying rubble and Junkions down. It was utter chaos inside the ship, Junkions running every which way, trying to abandon the ship. But some how, they made it out. The Decepticon supporters began to chase the Autobots.

Back inside of the Miraxus, Wildstorm was worried about Gees and Ironfire. They hadn't reported in since yesterday. Communication systems weren't very good anyway, but they had to make do with what was left. But the ship was looking cleaner, if not better. Even he, the captain, had to help out with the little chores sometimes. Grimlock grumbled about it, but that was Grimlock. "Break time." Wildstorm called. Ratchet and Sarkos gently put down the chunk of cargo container and sat on it. "You know Ratchet, I had this really strange dream." Sarkos began. Ratchet shrugged. "Sarkos, you know as well as I do that for you, strange dreams, are normal." "But this one

felt real. Too real. Ratchet, it was so real, that even though my logic circuits told me I was dreaming, I wasn't sure." "Sounds interesting. Tell me about it, maybe I can help."

"It began with a room. It was a weird room, the floor seemed to be like a.. um. How would I say it. Design. It was abstract, but the design covered the entire room. It was like some strange form of art. There were these pillars sticking out at certain points of the design. The pillars were short and crooked, like the cargo clamp's prongs. It was a group of six, a hexagon. "As I was looking around, a metal tentacle grabbed me and I was sucked into the void. Deep voices began to murmur and whisper, I somehow knew they were talking about me. It felt like I was swimming among a school of barracudas, unharmed and unnoticed. Everything was a swirl of colors, and muted too. I got this clear image all of the sudden, that we were not wanted..'

"Then I woke up." Sarkos finished. Ratchet stared dead serious at Sarkos. "Sarkos, I don't think that guy was kidding." he said. "What? It was only a drea.." Sarkos managed to get out before Ratchet grabbed him by the arm and began running, dragging Sarkos along. "You have to tell the captain immediately."

Chapter 6: The Catacombs

The Autobot Junkions finally eluded the Decepticon Junkions. Gees and Ironfire had no idea where they were. They were near a building that seemed to be more elegantly done than the rest of the city, it was also somewhat more square and squat in overall shape. It had been done in stone and the right scale for the Cybertrons. The Junkions were setting up camp as Gees and Ironfire examined the building. Marion came up to them. "Beautiful isn't it?" she said. "What is it?" Gees asked. "It's the human's biggest museum. In fact, it was their only museum. This wing was built for us." Marion explained. "Why?" Ironfire mused. "Well, I'll show you." Marion opened the door and turned on the lights. From the door, Gees and Ironfire saw artifacts left over by the Autobots and Decepticons when they left Earth. The three walked in, the two Autobots awestruck. A hologram of Optimus Prime and Megatron were dead center in the great hall. It was spacious, with shining white walls and an ebony floor. At eye level, stretching all around the room, was displays of every Transformer toy ever made. Below each toy's case were the toy's name, and a picture of their other modes. There was a cat-walk that allowed humans to view the toys. And at the very end of the hall, was the Matrix. Below it was a plaque detailing how it came to be in the hands of the humans, which meant about two sentences. This was confusing to all present, as they already had what they thought was the Matrix. "The Matrix. Given to the people of Earth by Optimus Prime for safe-keeping." Ironfire read, "But if this is the Matrix, then what is that one that you have Marion?" "Wait, let me look at the Matrix I have." Marion said, and took out the Matrix she had and looked it over. "There's writing on itâ€¦ It says: Real genuine fake Matrix, Made on New Lithone. And 'Property of Ultra Magnus.'. Hey, here's a button." She pressed it and the center lit up on the fakery. "It's fake alright." Gees said, "But if this, " she indicated the Matrix on display. "is the Matrix, then we still need to get it and return it to Cybertron." "Well, there's one way of doing it." Ironfire said. He just picked the Matrix out of the suspension field it was in. He handed it to Gees. Then took the fake one and put it into the suspension field in place of the real thing. It was well lit, and

from his height, very real. "In case the Decepticons find this place." he explained, "If that souvenir fooled us, it's sure to fool them." He turned around and saw something that was quite chilling. It was things that the Earthlings couldn't have ever had, the Maximals had banned travel in this sector of space. It was the command center of a Maximal exploration ship. There were other, more gruesome displays, such as the sparkless body of the famous Depthcharge, and the somehow dead body of the infamous Protoform X. Others, he could not recognize, such as the other six Maximals displayed. One grotesquely disfigured body he did recognize, who could forget the face of the rebellious and dangerous Predacon known as Megatron. They had all been changed by some unknown process, and yet, they were still recognizable in some deep recess of his memory. The others felt it too, silent in grim fascination. Treadator and his small army of loyal followers trudged through the darkness of the streets. He was starting to get tired of burning energy to echolocate. He called the column to a halt. "Does anybody know where the light switch is?" He yelled, in order to be heard over the howling of the wind. He heard a few grunts and saw a lot of them exchange glances. Then all at once, they pointed to the only illuminated building around, the Particle Fountain. They started again, shambling toward the Particle Fountain.

The troop of Autobots trudged on, Marion guiding them. They came to a large collection of domes, and everything was still functional, lights filled the area around the domes. Each dome was massive, and had human writing on it. The openings were quite large, as big as the Cybertrons themselves. "What are they?" Gees asked, somewhat dumbfounded. Marion hesitated, somewhat unsure of the answer herself. "I think that they're the Biodomes. Never seen them before. Junk-Zar mentioned them occasionally." "What's in them?" Ironfire asked. "Umâ€¦ Plants and animals that couldn't survive out here." Ironfire looked up, seeing a huge hole in the fallen weather net, which revealed the yellow sky. "Point taken."

Outside the Pax Romana, Decepticons were busy trying to separate the girders from the ship's hull, crawling on the metal framework around the ship. A groaning sound was heard, and everything seemed to stop as the crew looked around for the source of the noise. A loud snap was heard, and the ship's nose fell further down. Megatron appeared several seconds later, and from the hatch, he shook his fist at the crew. "Imbeciles! Next time, try building a platform underneath!" he yelled out. Inside, the ship's new "spin" was noticeable. The floor was at a forty-five degree tilt, which made walking more than a little strange. Megatron grimaced and walked, uphill, to talk with Soundwave.

Sarkos was in his rest cycle when he bolted up straight, startled by a sudden, stray thought that had been very strong. He sensed the hatred and murderous intent behind the venomous words. [{"We were cheated of our destiny.}] it echoed, and an incandescent rage blasted through him. "Oh boy.." were the only words Sarkos could find to say.

Soundwave was supervising the pitiful crew's haphazard attempts at repairing the ship. Then the blast of hate ripped through him, only causing momentary discomfort. He shook it off. "Lord Megatron, the alien presence you spoke of. It does not appear to be pleased with us." Soundwave radioed to Megatron.

The Particle Fountain's doors were small, but a blast from Treadator's gun rendered it a moot point. With the Junkions milling around outside, Treadator forced Cable, at gunpoint, to lead the way. They both crawled through the long corridor that lead to the fountain room. Treadator promptly regained better control over Cable by grabbing the scrawny robot around the neck, lifting the smaller Cable off the ground. Cable viewed the desolation with muted terror. Treadator, being the consummate Decepticon leader, saw only power. If he could've smiled, he would have. As it was, he released his death grip on Cable's neck, letting him fall to the ground. Treadator waxed philosophical. "Energon. Enough to fuel a total conquest of Cybertron, and beyond. Even Predaking cannot deny our true destiny in the face of this prize. The Autobots will not stop us this time. We will crush the Maximals, tear apart the Pax Cybertronia, and rule all. This! This is our Fountain of Youth, our Philosopher's Stone! Can you feel the energies of destiny converging here, in this place, Cable?" "The only energy I feel here, Boss, is the stuff coming off that oversized Energon goodie. Something doesn't feel right." Cable wobbled. A deep snarl emanated from Treadator, and fingers were suddenly pressed into Cable's head, digging into his armor, leaving deep marks and crushing the front of his face. Cable was alive, but it would be some time before he could see or speak. Cable, although a worm, was valuable to Treadator, and needed to be taught, not killed. Cable fell to his knees, in a pile of dust. His hands felt something solid in the gritty, metallic grains. He pulled it out, unable to see what it was. Running his hands over it's surface, he realized that it was a face plate of some unfortunate victim. Treadator snatched the discovery away from Cable, and examined it. The titanium white face had lost it's flexibility it had in life. It was a mask of death. The optic lenses were missing, the face, distorted in some unknown agony. The wearer had died in unbearable pain. "Alas poor fool, I knew him not. In death, he pleases me at last." Treadator mocked. He idly tossed the face plate away, and began ripping his way to the outside world.

End
file.